

Message

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Sent: 1/7/2020 5:07:58 PM
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Subject: Newsroom: Aggressively Addressing PFAS at EPA

In the newsroom: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/aggressively-addressing-pfas-epa/>.

From: EPA Press Office <press@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 11:49 AM
To: Hackel, Angela <Hackel.Angela@epa.gov>
Subject: Aggressively Addressing PFAS at EPA

Aggressively Addressing PFAS at EPA

WASHINGTON (Jan. 7, 2020) — Aggressively addressing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) is an active and ongoing priority for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

“Under President Trump, EPA is continuing to aggressively implement our PFAS Action Plan - the most comprehensive cross-agency plan ever to address an emerging chemical of concern,” **said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**. “For the first time in Agency history, we utilized all of our program offices to construct an all-encompassing plan to help states and local communities address PFAS and protect our nation’s drinking water. We have moved forward and continue to forward with several important actions, including the maximum contaminant level process, that will help affected communities better monitor, detect, and address PFAS.”

In December 2019:

- **Groundwater Guidance:** EPA issued a guidance document to standardize the Agency's response to known PFOA and PFOS contamination at certain sites covered by federal law (i.e. CERCLA and RCRA). The guidance makes it clear that EPA will set remediation goals to ensure that PFOA and PFOS concentrations do not exceed 70 parts per trillion at those sites.
- **Toxic Release Inventory (TRI):** EPA released an ANPRM to consider adding PFAS chemicals to the TRI, a publicly available database where manufacturers annually disclose the quantities of certain chemicals they release into the environment, recycle, incinerate or otherwise dispose of. EPA is currently soliciting public comment on which PFAS should be included on the TRI in addition to the PFAS chemicals specifically listed and mandated by the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 including PFOA, PFOS, and GenX.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** On December 3, 2019, EPA sent a proposed regulatory determination for PFOA and PFOS to the Office of Management and Budget for interagency review. Once interagency review is complete, EPA will submit the proposal to the federal register for public comment. The proposed regulatory determination is the next step in the national primary drinking water standard setting process under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

National Leadership Summit & Community Engagement Events

In May 2018, EPA convened a two-day National Leadership Summit on PFAS that brought together more than 200 federal, state, and local leaders to discuss steps to address PFAS. The Summit set the following goals: evaluate the need for a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water, evaluate designating PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances, issue groundwater cleanup guidances for PFOA and PFOS, and develop toxicity values for GenX and PFBS. Following the Summit, EPA interacted with more than 1,000 people during community engagement events in Exeter, New Hampshire, Horsham, Pennsylvania, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Leavenworth, Kansas as well as through a roundtable in Kalamazoo, Michigan and events with tribal representatives in Spokane, Washington.

To respond to the most pressing issues raised at the Summit and community meetings, EPA issued the [PFAS Action Plan](#) in February 2019. The PFAS Action Plan is the first multi-media, multi-program, national research, management, and risk communication plan to address an emerging contaminant like PFAS. The PFAS Action Plan outlines the tools EPA is developing to address PFAS in drinking water, identify and clean up PFAS contamination, expand monitoring of PFAS manufacturing, increase PFAS scientific research, and promote effective enforcement tools. Additionally, it outlines EPA's commitment to take a wide variety of actions to address this emerging contaminant in both a short-term and long-term timeframe. Below is a brief high-level summary of some of the major actions EPA has taken or is currently taking to address PFAS.

Addressing PFAS in Drinking Water

In 2016 EPA issued Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS. Health advisories are developed to provide information on contaminants that can cause human health effects and are known or anticipated to occur in drinking water. To provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a life-time exposure to PFOA and PFOS from drinking water, EPA established the health advisory levels at 70 parts per trillion. The health advisories are not regulations, but are designed to give state, local, and tribal governments the information they need to better protect human health and the environment.

Additionally, EPA continues to work on developing new reliable methods to detect and remove PFAS in drinking water. On December 19, 2019, EPA announced a new method (Method 533) capable of detecting additional 11 PFAS chemicals. To date, EPA has developed methods to reliably detect for 29 PFAS chemicals in drinking water and information on EPA's validated methods is publicly available.

Identifying and Cleaning Up PFAS Contamination

EPA is aggressively investigating and cataloging known PFAS contamination across the country. EPA has worked with states and public water systems to monitor for six of the most prevalent forms of PFAS in drinking water supplies across the country. Through this effort, EPA collected data from 5,000 public drinking water systems, accounting for approximately 80 percent of the U.S. population served by public water systems. This information has been shared with state and local governments and is publicly available.

Further, EPA's Office of Research and Development is currently responding to requests from 13 state and territorial governments by screening for PFAS at high priority sites and training local health agencies to test for PFAS on their own.

EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management is providing cleanup assistance to 32 states and the District of Columbia to address PFAS at contaminated groundwater and soil sites. Examples of support to state cleanups include:

- **Cape Fear River (NC):** EPA is providing technical support to the State of North Carolina and helping them quickly determine the appropriate steps to address the presence of chemical substances in drinking water. Specifically, at the request of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), EPA has conducted an independent laboratory analysis of seven rounds of water samples being collected by NCDEQ at locations in the Cape Fear River.
- **Wolverine (MI):** EPA is supporting MDEQ's response to PFAS contamination of residential wells from Wolverine World Wide, Inc.'s, various operations in the Rockford, Mich. area. While MDEQ is taking the lead on drinking water issues, EPA personnel have assisted MDEQ in collecting water samples. EPA is working with the State of Michigan on a coordinated enforcement approach at the PFAS contaminated

site, and issued an administrative order to Wolverine World Wide, Inc. on January 10, 2018, to conduct further assessment and potential cleanup work at the site.

- **Chemours (WV):** To ensure the safety of drinking water, EPA requested that the Chemours Company sample for the perfluorinated compound GenX in public and private water supplies in the vicinity of its Washington Works, West Virginia facility. The agency is working with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency on this request. This request for sampling of drinking water wells in the Washington Works area is to be done in conjunction with ongoing sampling for PFOA, a legacy perfluorinated compound. EPA's understanding is that DuPont and Chemours replaced PFOA with the GenX, and the agency is concerned that drinking water wells near the Washington Works facility may be impacted with GenX just as they were by PFOA.

Monitoring PFAS Manufacturing, Importation, and Releases

From 2016 to 2018, EPA identified and inventoried all PFAS chemicals that are currently legally allowed for manufacture or importation in the United States. Further, EPA has completed almost 300 pre-market reviews of new uses of PFAS since 2006. Additionally, EPA has successfully encouraged many of the nations largest chemical companies to voluntarily cease manufacturing PFOA and PFOS.

EPA is committed to continue monitoring PFAS manufacturing and importation. On September 25, 2019, EPA submitted a proposed supplemental new use rule (SNUR) for long chain PFAS chemicals to the Office of Management and Budget for interagency review. This SNUR would eliminate a monitoring loophole and ensure that companies report to EPA when they import finished and intermediate products that contain certain PFAS as a manufacturing input (e.g. carpeting).

Toxicology Research

EPA is currently researching the human health effects of seven of the most common forms of PFAS. In 2019, EPA sought public input on draft toxicity assessments for GenX chemicals and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS). To develop these draft toxicity assessments, the agency relied on the best available science, including input from independent peer reviewers. The agency also engaged with federal and state partners throughout the development of the draft assessments. EPA expects to finalize these toxicity assessments in 2020 and will continue working closely with all of its partners as the agency works to consider public input and revise these assessments.

Further, EPA is currently conducting an Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) assessment on perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHxA), perfluorohexanesulfonate (PFHxS), and perfluorobutanoic acid (PFBA). The IRIS assessments will identify the potential human health effects from exposure to each assessed PFAS and will develop toxicity values, as supported by the available evidence. The assessments will evaluate both cancer and noncancer effects, including potential effects on the endocrine, hepatic, urinary,

immune, developmental, and reproductive systems. EPA expects to propose draft toxicity values of these chemicals for public and scientific review in 2020.

Research Grants

In FY 2019, EPA awarded \$9.95 million in grants to 13 Universities to conduct research reduce human exposure to PFAS, improve water monitoring and treatment methods. EPA also awarded \$1.7 million in grants to small businesses to commercialize new PFAS detection and treatment technology.

EPA plans to issue more PFAS research grants in 2020 and has already announced it will award \$4.8 million to promote research on reducing PFAS exposure to agricultural operations and rural communities.

Effective Enforcement

EPA has — and will continue to — take enforcement action against entities that violate federal environmental laws and regulations pertaining to PFAS. For example, EPA took enforcement actions in 2019 against facilities in West Virginia and North Carolina for violating requirements under the Toxic Substances Control Act while manufacturing PFAS chemicals.

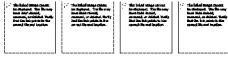
Further, EPA is currently evaluating a proposal to designate PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. EPA expects to formally propose this action in the next several months. If finalized, this would grant the EPA the ability to recover remediation costs associated with PFOA and PFOS cleanups from private entities legally responsible for the contamination.

What is PFAS?

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a group of man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used by a variety of industries since 1940. Common applications of PFAS include water and stain repellant materials, as well as fast-acting firefighting products. While the use of older variants of PFAS have been widely discontinued, legacy uses and a lack of commercially viable alternatives to certain public safety products (e.g. fire-fighting foams) have resulted in PFAS contamination in certain areas.

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